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Report on the field visit to Ecuador

Contents

Chapter		*Page*
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Background	2
III.	Role of the United Nations in Ecuador	3
IV.	United Nations system coordination	3
V.	UNDP activities in Ecuador	4
VI.	UNFPA activities in Ecuador	7
VII.	Observations	8
VIII.	Project visits	9

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I. Introduction

1. Members the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board visited Ecuador from 5 to 9 May 2003. Representatives of the following countries participated in the visit: Bulgaria, Canada, Comoros, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Sweden and Uruguay. The group was accompanied by the chief of the Executive Board and External Relations Branch of UNFPA and the administrative associate of the Executive Board Secretariat of UNDP/UNFPA. The team leader of the mission was Mr. Marco Balarezo (Peru); co-rapporteurs were Ms. Gabriela Tanjala (Romania) and Ms. Thora Broughton (Canada).

2. Ecuador has a fairly large country programme in which many United Nations organizations and bilateral donors are involved. The new Government of Ecuador has been in place since January 2003. The main purpose of the visit was to allow the delegation to engage in constructive dialogue with Government and United Nations officials and other counterparts, such as representatives of bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the donor community and the private sector. Another purpose of the visit was for the delegation to better understand the link between policy development in New York and the implementation of programmes in the field. Out of this interaction has come a better understanding of how assistance is coordinated among United Nations organizations, between these organizations and the Government, and with other development actors.

3. The visit also enabled members of the Executive Board to visit Ecuador in the context of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), providing them with the opportunity to study the harmonization and simplification of procedures designed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and impact of support to programme countries, and to further improve in the functioning and impact of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

4. The visit provided substantial and valuable insights into the role and work of the UNDP and UNFPA country offices. In this regard, the delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, the UNFPA Resident Representative and their respective staffs for their dedicated and professional work prior to and during the visit. It also wishes to thank the Government of the Republic of Ecuador, the municipalities of Cayambe, Cotacachi, Guamote, Guayaquil, Loja, Otavalo, Pedro Moncayo and Quito and their partners in civil society, as well as the other international organizations, for their warm welcome, kind hospitality, and extensive and frank discussions.

5. A very positive feature of the visit was the availability of the President of Republic of Ecuador, the President of the National Congress, relevant ministers and government officials (the Minister of Foreign Affairs, representatives of the Ministries of Public Health and Education, the Secretary of National Dialogue, the President of the Parliamentarian Women's Forum, the Director of the Ecuadorian Institute of International Cooperation and the Statistical Institute,) to meet with the delegation and their willingness to discuss frankly the situation in the country, national priorities, principal concerns and other issues.

II. Background

6. The UNDAF is focused on achieving equality and inclusion, while applying a human rights-based approach that takes into account empowerment of women and interculturality, poverty reduction (bearing in mind that more than 60% of population is living in poverty), environmental sustainability and democratic governance. Gender equality has been effectively mainstreamed and cuts across programmes in all three areas.

7. The delegation met the new President of Ecuador; the Foreign Minister; and the President of the Congress, as well as municipal and local officials and members of civil society organizations (CSOs) representing a wide range of interests and backgrounds, who revealed their deep appreciation of United Nations efforts, particularly with respect to development policy and support for the national development agenda. It was evident that these partners had respect for the United Nations Team, valued its work and consider it a trusted partner in meeting the difficult development challenges faced by the country.

III. Role of the United Nations in Ecuador

8. UNDP, UNFPA and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) have developed a relationship of trust and respect with the Ecuadorian people and institutions over the years in the tradition of United Nations neutrality and credibility. The cooperation with the new Government is very constructive, and the Government indicated its wish to see the United Nations deeply involved in the process of development in Ecuador.

9. Many United Nations organizations are involved in the Ecuador programmes. Resident organizations include UNDP, including UNIFEM and UNFPA; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Food Programme (WFP); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the World Health Organization (WHO); the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HABITAT); United Nations Volunteers (UNV); the World Bank; and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

10. The United Nations country team supports the newly elected Government in the development and implementation of its five main areas of concern: decentralization, the fight against corruption (institutional strengthening, transparency and accountability); competitiveness and productivity (employment, credit, capacity building, technology, and an equitable tax system); the fight against poverty (investment in human capital, participation and inclusion); dynamic and sovereign insertion into the international context (globalization, external debt, immigration); and improving social security (food security, civil and environmental security).

11. The inter-agency consultative process, including non-resident United Nations organizations, resulted in an agreement on areas of collaboration, as reflected in the UNDAF. Ecuador is one of five pilot countries in which the members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) are harmonizing their programmes. The areas of United Nations cooperation in support of Ecuador's national development priorities are: equality and inclusion; promotion of human rights; gender and the empowerment of women; poverty reduction through access to adequate social services and productive activity; environmental sustainability; democratic governance and transparency.

IV. United Nations system coordination

12. Coordination of the United Nations system is effected through the Resident Coordinator, as leader of United Nations country team, which is made up of representatives of all the United Nations organizations present in Ecuador. The UNDP Resident Representative is also the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ecuador and, as such, has a vital role to play in ensuring coordination and harmonization while avoiding duplication.

13. The United Nations House, which is occupied by the majority of United Nations organizations (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO/PAHO, WFP, UNV, UNIFEM, OCHA and UNHCR, while FAO, UNESCO and the World Bank maintain premises outside the House), went into operation at the beginning of 2000. It was felt by all the institutions that being housed in the same building would foster cooperation and interaction between them. Ecuador is the only country in the region with so many separate institutions in a United Nations House.

14. The United Nations country team works closely with bilateral donors, emphasizing a holistic, coordinated approach and focusing on the interrelated objectives of strengthening good governance, gender equity and sustainable development.

15. The United Nations alignment with national priorities has to a large extent been achieved; the current UNDAF is intended to bring greater coherence and efficiency to the United Nations' assistance programmes at the country level. Objectives and time frames are established in close consultation with Government so as to make United Nations assistance more effective. The programmes are evaluated jointly with the Government.

16. Many challenges remain, and further support from development partners will be needed in order for the Government to address them effectively. Strengthened coordination among United Nations organizations, international financial institutions and bilateral donors would also benefit the country in its effort to achieve national goals and reach international development targets.

V. UNDP activities in Ecuador

17. Having operated in Ecuador since 1956, UNDP is well established in the country, and appreciation of its work was widely expressed by Ecuadorian interlocutors throughout the visit. The United Nations Team in Ecuador considers that a fundamental problem in the country is inequality and exclusion, and has therefore framed its UNDAF and CCA in that context. The UNDP programme harnesses UNDP strengths in advocacy, policy, engaging civil society, consensus building and capacity development, in support of the UNDAF goals of poverty reduction, democratic governance and transparency, environmental protection and sustainable development.

18. The UNDP country programme corresponds to the three areas of concern of the UNDAF, namely, poverty reduction through access to adequate basic social services and productive activity; environmental sustainability; and democratic governance and transparency. The UNDP country programme is concentrated on: promoting social safety networks, economic reactivation policies and employment, fiscal and social equality, legal frameworks for environmental and natural resource management, environmentally sustainable local economies, decentralization, local governance, institutional and municipal management, citizen participation and democratic dialogue, as well as support to national human rights institutions and promotion of women political participation in decision making process.

Poverty Reduction

19. UNDP has developed a programme addressing poverty reduction directly through access to adequate basic social services; the stimulation of local economies; and the broad engagement of civil society in public debate on economic management.

20. The Fiscal Policy Observatory, a joint UNDP/UNICEF programme, is a CSO made up of respected experts from various sectors of society (one former member of the Fiscal Policy Observatory is now the Minister of Finance). The delegation was present at the launch of the 2003 Fiscal Policy Observatory document "Ecuador: Sustainable Fiscal Policy and Human Development, 1970-2010", which recommends prioritizing national budget expenditures to facilitate sustainable human development. The launch featured statements from the authors as well as audience comments on the appropriateness of the national macroeconomic policy. Much of the discussion centred around the issue of the current debt burden (around 36% of gross domestic product) and the likely impact of further borrowing on the ability of Ecuador to invest in the social sector and other priorities. UNDP and UNICEF are considering making the information and analysis more widely available in the form of an executive summary so as to further inform public debate on economic issues.

21. In the interest of stimulating local economies and job creation, UNDP supported the formation of a Business Development Agency (BDA) in Loja. The BDA offers one-stop government services to small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, thus eliminating long waiting times and bureaucratic red tape that can leave small businesspeople vulnerable to requests for bribes. The BDA functions as a business incubator, offering training and counseling; procedures manuals for setting up a business; facilitation of credit negotiations; and market and other feasibility studies. By bringing market vendors and other very small operators into the mainstream business community, the BDA improves their business prospects while adding them to the pool of taxable resources in the municipality. Additional BDAs are being developed in six other locations as from the middle of 2002.

Governance

22. The group was briefed by the Secretary of the National Dialogue, a national policy consensus-building structure introduced by the new government with the assistance of UNDP. The secretariat of the National

Dialogue is located in the Office of the President; the Secretary indicated that UNDP had played the key role in guiding this process. The intent is to link social demands with policy formulation. Topics have included social, economic, governance (including corruption) and environmental issues. The National Dialogue has sought to involve groups representing a very wide range of interests, gathering some 700 to 800 people around 21 roundtables. Expectations were not high at the outset, but the process surprised sceptics by achieving real progress in its first round, helping to create a more unified national vision for the political, economic and social development of Ecuador. The Government intends the National Dialogue to be an important permanent mechanism in support of democratization. UNDP also used the process to validate some of its work in the CCA/UNDAF.

23. UNDP is now implementing component three of the National Human Rights Plan (NHRP), *Strengthening of the Ombudsman's office*, which is part of a wider project to support implementation of the NHRP, including: support to its coordination mechanisms, support to the National Congress in connection with the harmonization of Ecuadorian legislation with international standards, and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with the establishment of an inter-ministerial reporting system to treaty bodies; institutional strengthening of the Ombudsman's office, including training of staff and the preparation of an operations manual. Support, including training and workshops, has also been provided to non-governmental organizations. A pamphlet focusing on the rights of African-Ecuadorians has been produced and is widely available in the community.

24. At the local level, through capacity development in the planning and implementation of municipal programmes, UNDP is advancing democratic governance in important ways while assisting with critical social services and easing barriers to economic development. The delegation met with officials of the municipalities of Guayaquil, Quito, Cayambe, Cotacachi, Otavolo, and Pedro Moncayo. UNDP efforts in both cities focus on effective and accountable governance at the local level, including corruption-free administration; planning; and provision of essential services to the most vulnerable sectors of the community. Previous UNDP programmes had assisted the municipalities in developing their taxation systems through baseline property evaluation work; as a result, tax revenues now pay for these programmes.

25. Quito officials informed the delegation of a UNDP pilot programme currently under way with four local governments in different situations (one municipality close to Quito; Esmeraldas; one mestizo community; and one indigenous community). The programme focuses on modernizing municipal government, with particular emphasis on participation and preventive measures in combating corruption. This programme was selected for presentation at the third Global Forum on Fighting Corruption, held in Seoul, 29 to 31 May 2003.

Sustainable development

26. UNDP is working with Ecuador to preserve its biodiversity and promote sustainable human development in the Galapagos Islands through the control and eradication of invasive species; promotion of clean energy; disaster prevention; and engaging island residents in planning and execution work so as to foster a sense of ownership and create local capacities in control and eradication as well as emergency prevention. UNDP works in partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and bilateral donors on these programmes.

27. The delegation visited the emergency rehabilitation project in Tungurahua to assist those affected by the eruption of Mount Tungurahua. The project is aimed at rehabilitating communities and agricultural lands in the area affected by volcanic ash from the volcano. The project has also received considerable support from bilateral donors. The principal objectives of the project include building the capacity of communities to cope with the threat of a possible new eruption and the continuing problem of ash-laden rain in the Tungurahua region, as well as upgrading income-generating activities in communities in high-risk zones on the lower slopes in Tungurahua and Chimborazo provinces.

Gender equality

28. Ecuador has made important progress in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment. The delegation had a strong dialogue with representatives of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, CONAMU, Coordinadora Política de la Mujer Ecuatoriana (CPME), Consorcio de Mujeres Provinciales (CONCOPE), Indigenous and Municipal Leaders, and other Women's groups counterparts, and was briefed on the projects that aimed to support the Government in promoting gender equality, supported by UNDP, UNIFEM and UNFPA. Challenges remain with regard to access to land ownership; credit, women's role in labour; education; participation in decision-making procedures (especially at the local level); health; and gender violence.

Donor coordination

29. Since 1998, donor coordination has been conducted through the Ecuadorian Institute of International Cooperation (INECI). In close collaboration with UNDP, INECI has introduced a system of sectoral roundtables in which all multilateral, government and NGO donors participate. Each government ministry has a department of international cooperation linked to the roundtable process.

Millennium Development Goals

30. The programme is well aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The first MDG Report for Ecuador will be produced in cooperation with the Government towards the end of 2003. Both the World Bank and IDB have agreed to collaborate in its preparation.

United Nations Development Fund for Women

31. The UNIFEM programme for the Andean sub-region is coordinated by a small team based in Quito. Working with governmental, non-governmental and United Nations partners, UNIFEM applies a women's human rights framework to achieve two strategic objectives: (i) promoting Women's Social and Economic Rights ("DESafios") with three main lines of action – strengthening women's involvement in accountability processes through monitoring government commitments and concurrent resources, expanding women's participation and influence in political and economic decisions at all levels, supporting grassroots women's organizations to advocate for enforcement and enjoyment of their economic and social rights – and (ii)) strengthening efforts to end violence against women, focused on: supporting governmental and non-governmental partners to pilot, document and share prevention, protection and advocacy strategies; and promoting gender justice by supporting women's expanded and informed participation in governance and in peace processes.

32. Ecuadorian interlocutors emphasized the importance of opening up space to talk about violence, and to develop prevention, protection and advocacy strategies to deal with gender violence in communities. The Ecuadorian women with whom the delegation met stressed the importance of training community leaders in this area. The caucus of women parliamentarians is supported by an interagency programme (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM) in developing tools to help them promote policies in defence of gender and to manage budgets with a gender focus. Several UNIFEM programmes are conducted in collaboration with UNDP and UNFPA.

United Nations Volunteers

33. Forty-five UNV volunteers, including many from the South, participate in a wide range of United Nations programmes in Ecuador. Their primary focus is on capacity development, but they also provide technical expertise, working with communities to identify needs and to monitor local perceptions of programme results.

34. Building on the earlier UNDP-funded Integrated Management Plan of the San Pablo Basin, UNV engages local communities in the development process to strengthen local CSOs and local governments and to improve environmental management. Indigenous communities participate fully in the process. The programme encourages area farms to diversify their products and makes credit available for local small enterprises.

VI. UNFPA activities in Ecuador

35. UNFPA had been operating in Ecuador since 1988. As the lead organization in the United Nations system supporting implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 and its follow-up in 1999 (ICPD + 5), UNFPA assists Ecuador in ensuring universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, education in schools and local communities, and population and development strategies in support of sustainable development.

36. The new UNFPA will contribute to achieving the UNDAF goals through improving access to adequate basic education (10 years); as follows: reduce hunger and improve nutrition; promoting equality and the empowerment of women; and the use of population and development links in national and local policies and planning processes. UNFPA is building on its long experience in empowering women to contribute to the Government priority of reducing poverty by making a more participatory society and removing barriers to people's access to development opportunities. This is a demonstration of the strategic vision and new priorities of UNFPA as it contributes to a wider development agenda while keeping the focus on ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, particularly for indigenous women and adolescents.

37. In the area of social development and planning, UNFPA often collaborates with national organizations. Most notably, UNFPA provided technical assistance to the Ecuadorian Institute for Statistics and Census (INEC) for the 2001 Census. INEC expressed its appreciation of this long-standing cooperation. The mission members received fact sheets giving the census data from each municipality visited which had been published by INEC and UNFPA and are now being used in the local planning process.

38. The delegation visited the Jambi Huasi Health Centre, which combines modern and traditional indigenous medicine. The centre was started with UNFPA support and is currently self-sustaining through community contributions. The centre's ten-year experience has demonstrated that provision of reproductive heaith for indigenous people can be a very effective contribution to poverty reduction efforts if approached in a culturally sensitive manner. UNFPA is supporting the centre in developing sex education approaches for indigenous adolescents in an innovative and culturally appropriate manner.

39. UNDP cooperation has been instrumental to introducing health care at primary health-care clinics in poor and rural areas. The UNFPA approach of supporting community involvement in promoting reproductive health, as seen in the municipality of Guamote, contributes to the strengthening of municipal governance by involving municipal authorities in ensuring the quality of health-care services and the community leaders, and local religious leaders in formulating a fully participatory healthcare plan for the municipality that includes reproductive health, including family planning, as one of its priorities.

40. The delegation visited UNFPA projects for young people in Guayaquil and Loja. During the visit to the Jose Peralta Technical College in Guayaquil, they met with teachers, mothers and peer promoters, and heard children describe their experiences as "Young Facilitators, Young Promoters in Schools". During the discussion, it became clear how important this project was to young people – both male and female – from marginal urban communities. The project encourages gender equity, provided reproductive health information and education, and helps prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. It also strengthens citizens' involvement in promoting the human rights of women and children. An NGO partner provides health and psychological care to those suffering the consequences of domestic and gender-based violence. Participants in the project showed a genuine commitment to human rights, sexual and reproductive rights and the right of children and adolescents to a life without violence

41. In Loja, the delegation visited the Malacatos Youth Centre and interviewed young participants in a UNFPA-assisted project being implemented in the municipalities of Loja, Zamora, Machala and Santa Rosa. Young people's leadership is essential in the project, which makes innovative use of dance and theatre to initiate discussions around sensitive topics. During interviews with the mission, the young participants demonstrated a mature understanding of sexual and reproductive rights and personal responsibility.

42. Another project visited, the Las Tres Manuelas centre in Quito, focused on assistance and counseling for women and children who were victims of domestic and gender-based violence. UNFPA helped start the centre and it has now become possible for the municipality of Quito to take over and continue to support it.

VII. Observations

43. The programmes of UNDP and UNFPA constitute a holistic approach to policy advice and advocacy on human rights; democratic governance; pro-poor and pro-women economic and social policies; and sustainable development with attention to the interrelationships between the areas. Capacity building is an important component of the programmes. The confidence and respect of the host Government are essential to the success of the programme.

44. The United Nations Country Team has a strong awareness of the usual challenges of coordination among United Nations agencies. In Ecuador, the team has used the instruments of CCA and UNDAF effectively to enhance their own coordination.

45. The Ecuador programme is an example of the "new" UNDP, uniting strategic policy work in democratic governance, poverty reduction and sustainable development at the national and local levels. The following are essential components of the success of the programme:

(a) There is a close alignment between United Nations programmes and Government priorities;

(b) National ownership and national execution are evident and appropriate.

(c) UNDP plays an effective role in donor coordination, facilitating the work of INECI in this regard.

(d) The United Nations House provides the United Nations in Ecuador with a distinct and unified identity and fosters increased communication and collaboration among organizations, with evident synergies among programmes. There is a significant level of joint programming.

(e) The Ecuador programme represents an excellent example of gender mainstreaming.

(f) UNDP-Ecuador is enhancing the transparency of government budgetary processes while involving the public in a more informed debate so as to hold the Government accountable for its economic decisions.

(g) Through support to civil society organizations and to the office of the Ombudsman, UNDP has increased people's understanding of their human rights under the Constitution and their options for action.

(h) Through the National Dialogue, UNDP is facilitating participatory processes and consensus building in an environment characterized by deep divisions and inequality among the different groups.

(i) Through capacity development in the planning and implementation of municipal programmes, UNDP is advancing democratic governance, assisting with vital social services and easing barriers to economic development.

(j) The programme presents innovative approaches to reducing corruption through increasing transparency and accountability in government.

(k) UNFPA, UNIFEM and UNDP programmes are making a major contribution to Ecuadorian women's empowerment.

46. The CCA and the UNDAF have increased coherence and coordination, resulting in better programme delivery. These instruments have also enhanced the position and authority of the Resident Coordinator, and constitute an important instrument for dialogue with the Government and the United Nations system.

47. The efforts of UNDP to move upstream into policy advice have been successful in Ecuador. This redirection was possible thanks to extensive knowledge derived from long-standing, project-based presence of UNDP in the country as well as that of a long-serving, knowledgeable staff.

48. The delegates encourage the UNDP country team to continue working in a way that strengthens national ownership and policy coherence, and supports existing national frameworks. The work of the country team will, at the request of the Government, promote and, if necessary, support Government mechanisms that pool, harmonize and coordinate donor projects, programmes and resources. In special development situations, UNDP has been able to make valuable strategic interventions that have bridged the gap between relief and long-term development.

49. Since the UNDP country office received only a small amount from the regular budget, it has to devote considerable time and effort to mobilizing resources from bilateral donors and the host Government. While many donor Governments work to increase the core budget of UNDP, others prefer to direct their support to specific thematic areas so as to show that results are specifically linked to their individual contributions.

50. UNFPA plays a vital role in promoting awareness of reproductive and sexual health, as well as in supporting primary health facilities, particularly for indigenous populations in rural areas, the Andean and Amazonian regions and the coastlands. Women and adolescents are the primary focus, while increasing attention is being paid to the role of men

51. UNFPA contributes significantly to the UNDAF goals, particularly through the strong focus the on empowerment of women and civil society, which are fundamental to democratization, good governance and poverty reduction in the country. In these efforts, the relationship between UNFPA and the Government appears to be both productive and mutually beneficial. National and local officials expressed strong support for, and ownership of, UNFPA programmes.

52. The human rights approach applied by both UNDP and UNFPA in all their programmes is being successfully implemented. The emphasis on empowerment, gender equality and indigenous populations is a key aspect of this strategy and should continue.

53. It is important to achieve greater collaboration, harmonization and coordination with other development partners, including the World Bank and the IMF, in order to increase the effectiveness of programme delivery. The field visit participants would have found it useful to meet with representatives of the World Bank and other relevant international financial institutions.

VIII. Project visits

54. Additional information on several of the projects visited is provided below.

Public Transportation in Quito

55. UNDP has assisted with master plans for transportation in which it has also been responsible for the transparent, accountable administration of all associated work, including contracts. Municipal officials emphasized the importance of the UNDP contribution to developing corruption-free systems and the transparency and public scrutiny required to enforce them, and to fostering a culture intolerant of corruption.

56. The members of the Executive Board were introduced to the work of the Municipality of Quito, which is contributing to the Rationalization Plan for Public Transportation in Quito by providing advisory services, studies and basic principles required to initiate global transportation planning in Quito. The project is financed with municipal resources and is being undertaken with the support of UNDP in technical and legal aspects. Its main objective is to define a 10-year transportation development plan.

57. Some of the important issues discussed were: the project to: strengthen those areas of the present transportation system that are worth maintaining; extension of the "Trolebus" project to the northern and southern parts of the city; building avenues with dedicated routes; design and implementation of computerized signalling, traffic lights and other equipment; implementation of an integrated rates system, and implementation of procedures to transfer the "Trolebus" system" to the private sector (transfer to a mass-transportation company is scheduled for 2003). Important steps already taken were the establishment of the regulatory framework, adopting

two legal instruments – the Ordinance for Regulation of Public Transportation in the Metropolitan District of Quito and the Master Plan for Transportation – and development of the infrastructure.

Emergency Project in favour of population affected by the eruption of Mount Tungurahua, Ecuador

58. The members of the Executive Board visited several communities affected by the eruption of Mount Tungurahua. The project has had a visible impact in training people in the communities in intensive agriculture (greenhouses to protect crops); health (improved water supply and housing conditions); education (teacher training and infrastructure repair); animal health; the development of evacuation plans; and creating awareness of risk management and mitigation activities.

59. The Resident Coordinator promoted the creation of the inter-agency United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) to support the Disaster Management Team (DMT) in managing and administering humanitarian aid in response to natural or man-made disasters, in close cooperation with public authorities, the private sector, the education system and NGOs. UNDP provides technical assistance and ensures transparent financial management, which gives confidence to bilateral donors such as the French Embassy, the International Red Cross, the Italian Government and OCHA.

60. The delegation would like to thank all the members of the communities for their enthusiastic welcome and kind hospitality. Continued United Nations support for this project will prove fruitful in the future in helping these courageous people.

61. Additional information on several of the projects visited is provided below.

The Municipality of Guamote

62. Members of the Executive Board visited the Sexual Reproductive Health in Guamote project involving the Municipality of Guamote. The project covers 35 500 inhabitants, 90% of whom are from the indigenous population.

63. The project promotes sexual and reproductive health in one of the poorest indigenous municipalities of Ecuador, aiming to improve access to adequate reproductive health services for the poor population of Guamote, to improve sex education for adolescents and to improve women's reproductive health. It emphasizes community participation and the empowerment of indigenous leaders, particularly women; networking of health services; basic reproductive health equipment; supplies for local health units; and training of health personnel, teachers (through the PLANESA programme, with support from the Ministry of Education), families and adolescents.

64. A very important aspect is that the local community is trying to promote projects on the basis of local resources of the municipality, and by training its members using technical assistance and the funds from UNFPA and the Children and Life Foundation.

Presentation of environmental protection and sustainable development programme in the Galapagos

65. The UNDP country team in Ecuador is implementing, in the Galapagos, the largest non-reimbursable programme in the world in the area of biodiversity, funded by the Global Environmental Facility. The objective of the programme is to preserve the outstanding biodiversity of the region by controlling invasive species.

66. The Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to conservation, having created a marine reserve and set aside 97% of the land area of Galapagos as a national park. The project aims at fully empowering Ecuadorian institutions and the local communities charged with conserving the islands to guard against future "bio-invasion" in a proactive and flexible manner, taking a precautionary approach to ecosystem management.

67. The participatory approach used by UNDP during the formulation of this programme helped to coordinate other donor initiatives and provided an opportunity for creating synergies. For example, IDB and Spanish Cooperation shifted their support to activities in areas that were not otherwise covered, giving priority to the

marine reserve, while the United Nations Fund provided support to a biodiversity-monitoring programme through UNESCO. The UNDP-GEF project ($18.3 million provided by GEF) intervenes at several levels to eliminate invasive species and encourage research. As part of the integrated sustainable human development programme, UNDP supports the introduction of renewable energy on the islands as well as mounting the financial package to fund the investment. Moreover, in response to the oil spill that affected the islands in January 2001, UNDP is promoting the formulation of a contingency plan for emergencies.

68. The delegation was informed of the expectation that the results from this programme would provide helpful inputs for biodiversity conservation activities scheduled for other ocean ecosystems.